1:Wilson E-5(1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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less when 'he (or she) of the pythons' has passed by. Mwaimuno explained: 'They say that if the owner of pythons or the owner of medicines passes when food has been spread out to dry, the food will disappear. He bewitches it (*abalaga*). It is as if he lookers after the food in his heart, and it disappears and becomes less.' Nevertheless, of the thirty-eight accusations of witchcraft recorded, none actually turned on loss of grain or pulse. We heard also that a witch may spoil a brewing of beer, causing it to taste bitter, but again we could trace no case of this.

The lust of witches for good food is commonly emphasized by the Nyakyusa and, unlike some other Bantu people, they do not make a direct connection between witchcraft and sex: there is no suggestion of incubi or succubae such as play a great part in Pondo thought,[1] and sexual dreams are not taken as evidence of witchcraft. The facts that the witches are witches by virtue of 'pythons in the stomach', that they always go naked, and fly through the air riding their pythons when on their evil nocturnal errands, suggest sexual associations, but we cannot prove that the Nyakyusa are conscious of such symbolism. It is, however, significant that the word commonly used for working witchcraft, 'threshing' (*abagula*), is also used as a polite word for sexual intercourse, and that the other word for working witchcraft *abalaga*[2] (passive: *abalagigwa*) is similar to *abalagana*, meaning to copulate. Bestiality and homosexuality between a grown man and a boy (but not between two youths) are spoken of as witchcraft (*ubulozi*), and sex play between girls, including stretching of the vaginal opening, is called *ubugalagala*, a word used for the cunning—the wicked cleverness—of witches.

An association is also made between witchcraft on the one hand and menstruation and pregnancy on the other. A woman who is a witch is said to pass on her witchcraft to her child by neglecting the menstruation taboos before the child is yet conceived. 'It starts when a woman is menstruating, then she begins to give the child her cunning (*ubugalagala*).' Some of the menstrual blood is

[1] cf. Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, pp. 272–83.

[2] *Ubulaga* and *ubulozi* are from *-laga* 'to speak evil'. For its meaning in other Bantu languages cf. H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, Vol. II, pp. 504ff. Also D. J. and J. D. Krige, *The Realm of a Rain Queen*, p. 250; C. M. N. White in *Africa*, 1948 (Vol. XVIII), pp. 69; E. W. M. Johnston, *A Comparative Study of Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages*, Vol. II, p. 408. The close similarity of meaning in a number of languages is striking.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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Christians are only affected by the shocked astonishment of fellow Christians, not by the disapproval of pagans, and the unit within which 'the curse' is commonly spoken of as operating is the congregation. In two of the cases we recorded (vide Document, p. 109) it was suggested that illness was due to the anger of neighbours, fellow Christians, over stinginess and greed, but in the other cases it was not village neighbours who were primarily concerned, but the Christian congregation, a group embracing members from many villages.

The type of behaviour believed to be punishable by 'the curse' of fellow Christ-ans also differs somewhat from that thought to be punished by 'the breath of men'. The virtues Christians emphasize more in theory, and 'the curse' is often said to be a punishment for fornication or adultery. The other sin commonly spoken of as bringing down a curse is disobedience, or disrespectful behaviour to the minister (or priest) or elder of the congregation. Among pagans 'the breath of men' serves also to sanction sexual morals and to sustain respect for those in authority, but their sex ends in different. It is incest, or familiarity between father- and daughter-in-law, which they regard as really evil, not sex relations outside marriage. And they emphasize respect to senior relatives and fathers' neighbours rather than to the leaders of any wider group.

Christians lay much less stress on hospitality to neighbours than pagans, and it is generally agreed that they eat alone more than pagans would dare to do. As one Christian put it, a pagan would always call his neighbours to share meat or beer when he had it, but a Christian might eat a sheep, or a goat, or even a calf, alone with his family. It is good, the Christians say, to call friends to share a feast, but not an unescapable obligation. Nor do Christians regularly send the entrails and ribs of any animal they kill to the chief, as pagans do, 'for', they say, 'we do not fear "the breath of men"'. But hospitality towards strangers is felt to be a condition of salvation. One informant explained that 'If a man is stingy towards his neighbours it does not matter; but if he is stingy towards a stranger from a distance, he might die from lack of food; and that would be the fault of the stingy one. Such a fault would prevent him from entering Heaven.' This statement points to the most striking difference between Christian and pagan morality—the range of moral obligations. A pagan's duties

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1937 F2617 Ngendo F2617
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mourners eat) is sprinkled with powdered medicine and carried out by the officiant and burnt, or thrown away under the banana. If the deceased has been buried elsewhere still a bunch of banana leaves representing the *ulufundo* is taken out. 'Until then the rubbish (*imisala*) is kept in the house and not swept out because they are grieving—a person cannot be clean, it would seem as if he did not grieve.'

765

Next the officiant takes an old pot and, holding it, circles round the hearth while her assistant drops pumpkin-seeds, beans, lentils and cowpeas into it and the participants sing: 'The croaking bird, the croaking bird (*ilimumme*).' The food is transferred to another pot and put on the fire and the officiant touches the hearth with different parts of her body (or makes gestures as if to do so), she and the participants saying as she does so: 'The knee is also put on (the fire), the heel is also put on, the backs of the knees are also put on, the loins are also put on, the belly is also put on, the back of the head is also put on.' Then she stamps noisily on the hearth, and the participants sing: 'It startles him. . . .'

Relatives and village neighbours are expected to bring small gifts of millet at this ritual and these are formally received by the officiant, who sits outside the mourning hut with two large baskets beside her and acknowledges each gift as it is brought and emptied into one or other of them. The one is for the millet of kinsmen, the other for that of neighbours. She addresses each giver in terms of his or her relationship to the deceased, announcing: 'Your grandchild has brought a measure, your daughter has brought a measure, your fellow (i.e. neighbour) has brought a measure, etc. . . .' This is spoken of as 'measuring the measures' (*ukupala imipale*); it is 'to greet the shade', and if millet is not available at the time the ritual is performed it is done symbolically.

[illegible]

A fresh piece of bark is stripped from the species of *fene* used for making bark-cloth, hammered a little and placed on a fresh banana leaf and sprinkled with powdered medicine. A grindstone is lifted on to it and the officiant grinds some of the millet just presented and allows it to fall on the bark. During the grinding the officiant says: 'The knee is also ground, the heels are also ground,' and so on, mentioning the belly and loins. From the time of the death until this ritual, hammering of bark-cloth in the household of the deceased is taken (*mushi*), for hammering bark-cloth is a symbol of sexual intercourse and 'the hammer belonged to him who died'. The first millet ground is made into a paste and later

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17

Nyakyusa
Seiga, Malingoni

It is forbidden for the heir to lie with the dead man's wives before the rituals are over. But at the time of the beer, when the drinking is finished, we put him into the house and he lies with them. If he has lain with them previously the seniors refuse to come. . . . But if all goes well the officiants raise the cry of triumph (*ukulala*) and shake a winnowing basket of seeds by the door and cry: 'Ours, ours, we marvel at the thing, we marvel at the thing (*ifyita, ifyita, tutemanile ilinde*).' If he fails they go to divine and the diviner says: '*Mimbo* (sickness from the shades), he has forestalled the ritual (*akimbile ubunyago*).' Then they pray to the Imasoso. He must have intercourse with all the women he is inheriting; yes, however old they may be, he must lie with them that night or else they will lose their strength of body or mind, or else their legs will swell. With the old ones he will never lie again! He drinks fresh milk to give him strength beforehand! Fresh milk gives strength, it produces semen.

The next morning each of the wives goes off to her father with *ilibelego* and with meat; the first is buried in the Imasoso, it goes to the place of the shades, the meat is eaten. And the man too goes with his *ilibelego* to his own father. Each wife makes her *ilibelego* by wiping her own and her husband's genitals with her hands and then taking cooked bananas in them. He himself does likewise at the end.

The *ilibelego* goes to the place of the shades, it is to drive away the shade of the dead man; before this he had not reached the place of shades but was on the way. In this manner we tell the shade that we have put another in his place, we tell him to go and join the other shades now and to come back with them to warm themselves by the fire in his old house.

Question: How can a chief who inherits many wives lie with them all in one night?

Answer: I do not know how. Kyala gives him strength! . . . He has intercourse with them all. Yes, really this does happen. . . . But if the man is old and fails to lie with them all, perhaps the wives will conceal the fact. He lies on one side of a partition wall with his wives and the people (for many come to sleep in his house that night) on the other. Then if he fails altogether . . . no one hears the partition with a stick, they all stay quiet till morning; but if he succeeds at first, and fails at the last few, they may perhaps conceal it. One of the wives is told by the officiants to beat the partition with a stick when he has lain with all his wives. When she does this the officiants who are in the doorway shake up lentils and millet and pumpkin-seeds in a winnowing basket and call out: 'Ours, ours! We marvel at the thing!' If he fails altogether they stay quiet and next day go to divine; the diviner says: '*Mimbo*.' Then they pray and pray, and persuade all the shades of old, and that night he tries again and the seniors come.

The seeds of lentil, millet and pumpkin are symbols of the shades, the

[To the funeral to the dead. — And yet]

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Gelya, Malgonde

767 *Shamba kalyeni nampendula ku kuyuda, ku kipatile akuyuda takulekaga:*
768 *longa takunyapatila takulapa shigili? Akuyuda ku kukuulaga bilujimo; pajo*
769 *longa tawulile pa kumbila mundu. Leli bilumendaga kangi takaja nalo bwila?*)
842 What we do comes from the shades and from Kyala himself. The
•831 blood is theirs and his together. Those who create (*akubumba*) a child say: "I am just eating at a woman," but Kyala creates a child! If Kyala and the shades do not 'cook' [i.e. do not cause desire] you will do nothing, the penis is flaccid, but if Kyala has 'cooked' then you really do something, your heart (*nakumbula*) is full of desire. Always the shades are there and we drive them away, they are there and we drive them away. . . .

775 A shade is resurrected in the body of his child (*Uuyuda ikuyuda ilolo*
mumbali gwe mwanake). . . .

764 Passing the basket of pumpkin-seeds, millet, and lentils between the
775 legs and on to the head and throwing to one side means: "Here between the legs there is work, may they go out in intercourse, and from the head where we dream, may they go out also." Because in the ritual we say: "Let them come into the body" at first, then we drive them away. Rubbing ourselves in the earth and passing millet between the legs means: "May they come",[1] throwing millet and so on to one side it is to drive them away, that they may go out.

Questioner: Which shade do you drive away?

Mwanene: He who has just died, we drive him away.

Questioner: What about the first ancestor?

Mwanene: He is there at their place [the place of the shades], we drove him away long ago, he just receives him [the newly deceased].

Questioner: Why the pumpkin-seeds in the harvest?

Mwanene: It is the season (*akalenga*) for begetting children. . . .

Questioner: Do the shades always come when a man dies?

Mwanene: Yes, they always come, they receive their fellow. Yes, even though he has died from sorcery they come and receive him, and even though he has died from witchcraft they come, the shades receive him, and if it is from illness he has died they also come. There is no
[745] death without the shades, they always come to receive their fellow.

When the witches have 'eaten' someone the shades come to receive
764 him. No, the witches eat him alone, but the shades receive him. Some-
775 one may get up in the morning and say: "I dreamed they ate me and I
743 was with the shades!" Then he is about to die. Sometimes someone
823 dreams and says: "In the night I was in the land of the shades with so-and-so, I left him there, I escaped myself and came home." Then his friend is about to die.

766 If you do not perform the ritual you go mad (*kukyendula ikigili*) or
775 perhaps you get very thin, and are unable to die, you are ailing and do

[1] I.e. the participants identify themselves with the deceased.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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K+Kut

MWAMASAMBWA: The bride does not cross water for it is said that the blood which began to flow when she reached puberty will not dry on her body if she does.

To sleep on the litter and to refuse to sleep on sleeping-mats is a sign of childhood (for during childhood girls do not think much about cleanliness, but are dirty); it means that they leave behind them [literally 'come out from'] childish things. The litter is burnt because if it has not been burnt the children take bits of it to make a fire and cook food, then, when they have eaten that food, their bodies are sick. We say the body becomes unhealthily fat (*ukujipyala*). Food is collected for a bride because if, later, a woman, who has not had food collected for her, eats food collected for another bride going through the puberty ritual, she will fall sick and her body will grow unhealthily fat. Bringing food for the *ukwambalila* and giving gifts at the *ukupwa* are to congratulate the bride because she has grown up, she is now an adult.

X: The wearing of banana leaves [at the bringing out] is a sign of fertility. The ritual is finished, the girl is someone's wife now. . . . The plantain represents the penis, the sweet banana the clitoris.

Sitting in a stream and letting water carry away pebbles placed between fingers and toes is a symbol of purification and separation from the shade. The first element—purification—was mentioned by most informants: 'The rite means that the dirt is finished,' said Pumkem's wife; but the more self-conscious identified 'dirt' with the shade. Mwamalimba made the matter quite clear. When asked why pebbles were placed in the cleft of fingers and toes, he replied: 'Kyala, when he created men, said: "At death throw it away, it is the shade, it is the body." '

QUESTION: Is the puberty ritual?

MWAMASAMBWA: It is to say that the shade has brooded over the child, since he created blood we throw him away. May the shade go with these rites, then may she bear children; if he does not go, if you do not wean the girl, then Kyala broods over her and she does not bear children.

QUESTION: Why does she avoid her father at this time?

MWAMASAMBWA: Because I, the father, and her mother, perform the ritual for our child. Our shade has entered into her, has brooded over her, therefore we do not come together on the mat until we have finished rearing our child; when we have finished, and have reared her, then we do what we will on the mat. If I want to lie with my wife [during the ritual] she refuses, saying: 'Our child has not yet finished, she is still undergoing the puberty ritual.' But if she agrees and we lie together, then our child will never bear. When we have finished the

2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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come him, it does not wish to come out. And although the faeces are firm they are the corpse. Because we bury a corpse underground, and faeces also go underground to the shades. They disappear by night, that is the shade. If someone excretes faeces and finds it in the grass we say: 'The shade has caught hold of him.'

Question: Are faeces associated with sexual intercourse?

Mwasambwa: Yes, the shade does both things, he causes diarrhoea and sexual intercourse. If you defaecate firm stools that is not the shade, that is the food we eat, but watery diarrhoea which troubles you repeatedly at night—that is the shade. If you have diarrhoea for three days people say: 'The shades have harassed you' or 'The shade has caught hold of you.'

Question: Madness?

Mwasambwa: That is the shade because it says: 'Since you have me in your belly, and they have not treated you, I cause this—these faeces are the corpse. A madman defaecates and catches hold of his faeces, perhaps he eats them, perhaps he binds it up in the grass and catches hold of it. It is the corpse.'

Kakuse, the doctor, also interpreted the puberty ritual as being, in one aspect, the transference of a girl from her father's group to her husband's and, like Kasitile and Mwasalemba, he identified sexual desire and potency with the shades. He said:

At puberty a girl has left her father's and has gone to others; if she dies he is whom she has gone buries her.

Question: Where does the blood of a woman come from?

Kakuse: If the girl is unmarried, from her shades; they create her blood, but in the ritual we treat her so that she moves to my place, she comes to my shades; the blood of a married woman is created by my shades and hers together. And the 'blood' of a man [i.e. semen] also comes from the shades.

Question: Do the shades sexual themselves at birth?

Kakuse: Yes, because if I am angry or my father is angry I do not beget a child, but when he has prayed I do so. If I am angry with the woman and she has caught hold of me and injured me, then we do not have a child. The ordeal (*mwafi*) convicts the woman. She goes to her father who prays. Then we have a child.

Question: Where does the power to beget and beget children come from?

Kakuse: From the shades, you have the shades in your belly. If they are not there you are all like women in the house, you cannot have an erection, but when the shades work, you have an erection.

Question: Whose shades are present at intercourse?

Kakuse: Mine, the man's and the woman's, we both have them,

CHAPTER V

THE RITUAL OF BIRTH*

§42 Kwoa (or Lwembe) and the shades create desire in men and women and control conception; when the shades are angry women do not conceive—this is one of the main tenets of pagan Nyakyusa cosmology, and it is combined with a limited knowledge of physiology. It is clearly understood that conception cannot take place without intercourse, and that gestation in human beings lasts for nine months, but it is believed that repeated intercourse is necessary for conception, and formerly, if a man found his wife pregnant after having lain with her only once, he accused her of adultery.

[83] [84] (a) *Taboos of prevention*

§42 763 The procreation of children is an ultimate value of Nyakyusa society and the accepted end of marriage, but it is regarded as dangerous under certain conditions and is hedged about with taboos. These are enforced so that both parents and children may be healthy; a breach of them is thought to result in violent diarrhoea, as well as monstrously swollen legs and weakness in men, general debility in children, and miscarriage or an excessive menstrual flow in women. The onus of observing them falls primarily on women, though their husbands must also co-operate, and a breach of taboo is treated as immoral, for it is believed to endanger the life, or health, or property of others.

● 821 Certain general conceptions underlie the taboos. The first is that of *ubupuli*, filth, which is held to come from the sex fluids, menstruation, and childbirth, as well as from a corpse, and the blood of a slain enemy. All these are felt to be both disgusting and dangerous, and the sex fluids are held to be particularly dangerous to an infant, hence the taboo on husband and wife resuming intercourse very soon after childbirth.

846 As for, when the child is very young, we think it very bad for the parents to sleep together at all, because when the child is very young

* This account came from a score or more women and from individuals, as well as from our regular informants in those whose names are mentioned.

R. Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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coughing disease to the owners of the house. . . . Pagans used to fear to let 784
those who are sleeping together touch the hearth-bricks or blow up the 772
fire in their house for, if they do so, then the owners of the house, both
men and women, fall sick coughing. They say it is the disease of fires
(*upote*). . . . But when a woman has borne a child and is suckling it,
and her husband is not with her, then it is not taboo.

Making fire by friction and, in more general terms, fire, are §31 •
symbols of sexual intercourse, and 'the fire of the body and the 772
fire of the house fight'. Drinking from a calabash cup is perhaps [372]
also a symbol of intercourse—the shape of the cup suggests it—but
there is no direct evidence of such an association.

The taboo on mixing the sex activities of different couples is §34
pushed to the point that women avoid for a day the milk of a cow 772
that has been with the bull. They say: "We will harm the cow.
It will abort." They compare it with themselves as women."

Two last pregnancy taboos may be noted which turn, not on §43
the feeling that like things are antagonistic, but that like produces 772
like. Things felt to be alike are treated as causally related. We
quote Mwembupeta, the village headman:

> Women fear to stand in a doorway when they are pregnant. They
> say: 'How should the child stand in the doorway? It will refuse to come
> out.' Because if birth is delayed, it is as if the child refused to come out
> of the house. That is the symbol. And I, the husband, feared also [to
> stand in a doorway]. Now we men do not fear; it is finished; but women
> still fear.
>
> And another thing, when a woman was pregnant we feared to sit
> close together, I, the husband, and my child. It was taboo. And for my
> wife and another woman to sit close together was taboo. It was said
> that she would bear twins, because we had sat together. Now we men
> do not fear, but women still do.

(*f*) *The confinement*

A first confinement, like first menstruation, is the occasion for §44
elaborate ritual, and though at later confinements (as at later
menstrual periods) certain taboos must be observed, they are less
numerous and less strictly enforced than those connected with the
birth of the first child, *umuuno gwa hanuga*.

A first child should be born at the husband's mother's house,
'and if the first child is a girl they will tell her to come again for
the second, saying: "Come that we may treat our husband [i.e.
grandson]."' The woman lies, during labour, on a heap of leaves

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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We interpret the induction, seclusion, and bringing out as symbols of death and rebirth. There can be no doubt that the induction and seclusion represent death. Strewing leaves—or laying a litter—which is an essential act in every induction is a sign of misfortune and death;[1] and at the induction of a bride her 'mothers' sing: 'Go, go and never return', and 'We wail a dirge'. The mourners, the nubile girl, the mother of a new-born child, and the parents of twins are all 'filthy' and one with the dead; Kasitile said of mourners: 'We have died, we are the corpse.' The period of seclusion implies a sojourn with the shades, and our hypothesis is that it represents both death and gestation. The hut appears as a symbol of the womb in the pregnancy and 'gaping cough' rituals, and the doorway which 'belongs to the shades' is a symbol for the vagina. In the pregnancy ritual, passing through the doorway is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of birth, and in the death ritual mourners come out of the doorway stooping, and bump their heads against an obstruction. In the 'bringing out' in the death and puberty rituals, the mourners and the nubile girl run in and out of the doorway and water drops from the thatch. Kakuse, the doctor, interpreted this as a symbol of the mourners' receiving the shade back on to their bodies. We interpret it, rather more widely, as a symbol of rebirth. Both men and spirit are reborn, the shade in the bodies of the participants. 796

All through the rituals the connection of the shades with 796
potency and fertility is emphasized. They cause menstruation and 775
sexual desire; they are present in intercourse and ejected as semen; §3
they control conception; they control fertility in the fields. 'The shade and the semen are brothers.'[2] 'When they shake the millet and pumpkin-seeds (after ritual connection) the seed is semen . . . and it is the shade. . . .' The symbols of male and female, plantain and sweet banana, occur repeatedly. The wearing of them is explicitly interpreted as a symbol of fertility, and laying them together under the litter is perhaps a symbol of the marriage union, like eating the banana with *dipiki* medicine. Intercourse between husband and wife is the culmination of the rituals of death, puberty, and twin birth, and is held to be essential to the health of

[1] Cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 220.

[2] Cf. Bhaca, *idlozi*: shade, semen (M. D. Hammond-Tooke, *A General Ethnographic Survey of the amaBhaca*, Unpublished thesis presented for the degree of Ph.D. in the University of Cape Town); Xhosa, *idlozi*: semen, virile (A. Kropf, *A Kafir-English Dictionary*); Zulu, *idlozi*: departed spirit (C. M. Doke and Vilakazi, *A Dictionary of the Zulu Language*). 971 119

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 F7617 Ngonde F7617
Nyakyusa

776 the wife or the widow (even though she be old), as well as proof of
775 the support of the shades for the husband or heir. A symbol of the
•831 ritual connection, the *ilibalaga*, is offered to the shades of both lineages. Indeed, the rituals of death and twin birth, as well as the ritual of puberty and marriage, may be interpreted as a celebration of the union of husband and wife. For the parents of twins the end of the ritual marks the resumption of married life after a break during which contact between them was felt to be dangerous; for a widow and the heir of a dead man the end of the death ritual marks the beginning of their union.

776 The admonition of a widow or the mother of twins on her proper behaviour as a wife,[1] like a girl at her first marriage, underlines the fact that the death and twin-birth rituals are, in a sense, also marriage rituals.

[782] 775 The parts of the homestead connected with the shades are: first, those associated with the procreative activities of husband and wife—the hearth, the bed, and the doorway of the hut. Prayer may be made at the hearth, and offerings are poured out on the hearth-bricks, or left overnight under the bed. 'The doorway is the shades' and much of the action in ritual takes place there. As has already been shown, the hearth is explicitly associated with the sexual life of husband and wife: hearth-bricks are plastered at marriage, making fire by friction is a symbol of the marriage union, firewood is associated with a woman's reproductive capacity, and the hearth must not be approached by sexually active people other than the owner of the hut and her husband. The bed is the marriage bed. The doorway is identified with the vagina. Secondly, a defined grove of bananas, usually those nearest the doorway of the chief wife's hut, is thought to be frequented by the shades. It has been shown that plantains and sweet bananas are the symbols of male and female in all the rituals: in the sacred banana grove only plantains are grown. Bananas are propagated by suckers and the symbolism implied (but never explicitly stated) is that the place at which the offering of meat to the shades is placed represents the lineage which continually reproduces itself. What is explicit is that [778] the banana grove is sacred, and that offerings are placed or buried at the root of a banana plant. We were told: *'Ilibala*[2] *lyakutala*

[1] We did not see this or the twin ritual observed, but were told that the mother of twins was sometimes admonished by her husband's sisters.

[2] *Ilibala*: a single banana plant from the sacred banana grove, a ritual killing of cattle in the sacred grove of a chief, ephemeral sacred sweet, glucose (Holy Communion (southern usage)).

B: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936) 1936 F7017 Nguendo F7017 Nyakyusa

§82 Impotence and barrenness are well known facts, and magic is much used
§95 to cure them; but apart from their operation it is believed that each
§84 conception directly depends upon the frequency with which a man visits his wife. And thus the bearing of children is, for a woman, a demonstration of her husband's great affection for her. People address the number of children that a woman has borne to prove, in conversation, that she is her husband's favourite.

§95 Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan Nyakyusa: a plurality of wives is necessary, in this society, for full sexual satisfaction, wives bring a man wealth, prestige and authority, the more wives he has the more children, he thinks, will be born to him.

§53 It is believed that any contact with the sexual fluids is dangerous to a
§31 young child's health, and so, after a woman has borne a child, her husband is supposed wholly to refrain from intercourse with her for about a year, until the child is old enough to play by itself and allow its mother time to wash in the mornings before suckling it. Then he may begin to visit her again, but still she must not become pregnant until the child is weaned. "If she does her breasts become rotten," and the first child is harmed. As children are not weaned for two or three years, this rule involves the
§32 couple in not another year or more either of celibacy or of infrequent intercourse (which also is believed to avoid conception). These taboos on intercourse after a child's birth are to some extent observed in practice, and are one of the reasons for polygyny among the Nyakyusa.

§44 Another reason is the absence of hired labour. With a few minor
§45 exceptions the only way a man can increase the supply of labour at his disposal is by marrying more wives. Polygyny is the mark of a wealthy man, conditioned by his control of cattle, conditioning his supply of food. And the cattle spent in marriage come back again with interest as the polygynist's daughters begin to be betrothed and married.

§93 It is extremely common for a man to take as his second or third wife the sister, half-sister, or brother's daughter of his first or second wife. By doing so a man pays a great compliment to the wife whose sister, or niece, he takes and to her family; his action implies complete satisfaction with her and friendship with her family. He sends his wife home "to fetch our (her kinswoman) into the open" (*ukwisisha*); but she will not agree to do so unless she approves of him as a husband, and so, if she does agree, her action likewise compliments him. I know of one case in which a man wished to take his second wife's younger sister in this way,

9: Wilson E-5 (1924-1955) 1959
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and achievement. An account of the treatment of a field for protection against wild pig emphasizes this.

If people wish to protect a crop from wild pig they go to a doctor to ask for medicine. When he gives it to them he tells them that there must be no quarrelling in the home after they have barricaded the field. Four women go to the field with the husband of the one who cultivates it. They go after sunset. One woman is shaved; her head is a symbol of the garden devastated by pig. A second woman, who keeps her hair, has a head-pad on her head and carries kraussias with medicine. She enters the field and eats the kraussias. The husband climbs a hill or a little distance, and two of the women go into the long grass close to the field. The bald pair twists a head-pad and the one with hair smears it with medicine and as they do so they look towards their husband and abuse him saying, 'You lay with your mother', and he answers as them saying, 'The heifer spewed of your father' . . . and many other insults. Then the women walk round the edge of the field, sprinkling medicine, and they go out the way they came in. The circular pad is a symbol of the barricade placed round the field. When they return home they do not eat but go to sleep hungry (though the slaves may eat beforehand). If they quarrel, the pig finishes the food. It is as if quarrelling destroyed the fierceness, the power, of the protective medicine; you must put aside all quarrelling that the medicine may be powerful. If the pigs come it is as if there were a quarrel, as the woman and her husband quarrel in the field administering the pig. The husband on the hill is like the pig approaching the field, his wives in the long grass also represent pigs. . . . The husband and his wives quarrel only in the field. If, when the maize is ripe, the husband beats one of his wives for any cause she does not go to pick the maize herself, a friend picks it for her. If she goes in her anger she finds the maize finished, nothing but earth is left.

How the link between medicines and morality is made plain. Quarrelling weakens medicines of all sorts and renders them ineffective. But a mimic quarrel between husband and wives in the fields renders the medicine effective. It represents the battle between the pig and the medicines. There is a suggestion elsewhere (pp. 69, 115) that pigs are sent by the dead when kinsmen or neighbours quarrel, but in the account just quoted it is implied that quarrelling in the home directly injures the medicine.

In themselves, many medicines are neutral. They may be put to good or evil ends, but because they are mysterious and powerful, they are feared, in the same sort of way as cosmic energy is feared in contemporary society. Men use medicines themselves 'for purely peaceful purposes', but they are shocked at

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for an appropriate medicine, and his main function is organising the observances.

(d) SYMBOLISM

In the field of medicine imagination runs riot, and associations are unpredictable. The ingredients of most medicines are professional secrets and unknown to the user who takes the concoction on trust from his doctor, and inquires no further. Therefore the study of medicine is not linked to the study of social relationships in the same manner as is the study of ritual, for the symbolism of medicines is individual and free, whereas the symbolism of ritual is common and obligatory.

Nevertheless, the imagination of doctors works within the general symbolic system, and such knowledge as we have indicates that many of the associations made are similar to those used in ritual. In medicine, as in the rituals of kinship, one type of banana stands for a male, another for a female, a banana sucker represents a lineage, a sprouting shoot conception. Smithing and cutting are felt to be alike, and the embers iron that trickles out of a forge is linked with menstrual blood. Hair stands for growth, and a bald gate a devastated field. A ring, or circumambulation, implies a protecting fence. Pythons, crocodiles, leopards, and lions stand for power and majesty, spears and thorns for attack; vomiting and emptiness for innocence, spitting for forgiveness. There is colour symbolism in medicines (though we know little of it save that the dyestuff which stands for the blood of the lineage is red, or reddish brown), and auditory symbolism, the rumble of thunder and the groaning of a hollow being identified. Men mimic that which they wish to avoid, as well as that which they desire; like things are antagonistic as well as sympathetic. No doubt a laborious study of prescriptions would reveal further general principles of association, as well as the range of individual imagination, but such a task has yet to be undertaken.